

Sonic The Hedgehog Bible

I. The Sonic Story

Sonny Hedgehog was born on Earth in the early 21st century, in the town of Hardly, Nebraska, population 1,226. He and his mother and five sisters live underneath a scraggly hedge beside the local burger joint, and subsist on burger scraps, milkshakes, and the occasional slug or bug that crawls their way. They are a poor but happy family. Unfortunately, Sonny's dad died when Sonny was just a few days old, after falling into a gurgling, festering vat of toxic waste dumped in a nearby pond.

Mama Hedgehog does her best to keep Dad's memory alive, however, regaling the kids with stories of his goodness, resourcefulness, and great agility.

"He was the fastest hedge-runner this town has ever seen!" she exclaimed as her family enjoyed tea and mealworms in front of a roaring fire. "I hope all of you will take after him," she said wistfully as she cast a loving eye upon Sonny. Sonny looked up at the framed photo of his father which stood proudly on the mantel. The firelight cast strange yet comforting shadows on the earthen walls and ceiling of the burrow. All at once, the face in the picture seemed to snuffle and wink.

"Did you see that, Mom? Dad winked at me! He's counting on me to be somebody great! Did you see, Mom, did you SEE?" said Sonny, jumping up and down excitedly.

"Sssshh," honey. "I'm sure that wherever he is in Hedge Heaven, your father is looking down on us all and sends us his love." She gathered the

dinner plates and smiled gently at her son. Never had terribly good eyesight, she thought to herself. And yet, there was something special about her son. Something she couldn't quite put her paw on...

* * * * *

There was something special about Sonny. Many something specials, as a matter of fact. During the first summer of his life Sonny grew handsome and clever, with thick, bushy brown quills, a headstrong personality, and a rambunctious sense of humor. His favorite trick was to frequent the local bowling alley and curl up in the ball return, awaiting the grasp of an unsuspecting bowler. "Yeeooww!" the bowler would shriek. "Must be that darned hedgehog again!" the bowler would yell, and the whole team would crack up at the practical joke.

And sometimes, Sonny would change his tactic. He would curl up ever so tightly and stay perfectly still as the bowler tossed him down the alley. At the last moment, right before he hit the head pin, Sonny would uncurl and scamper away, routing the bowler's perfect score.

Although he loved playing practical jokes on people, Sonny also loved people. While making the rounds for juicy tidbits and gossip, he would drop in on the ladies of the local quilting circle to offer a convenient pin or needle from his ample, portable supply. He spent the summer frolicking in the town park with the other children, donating quills so they could scribble designs in the sandbox. In time, he noticed that his playmates drew the same pattern over and over again while pointing at him: SONNY. In this fashion, over a few weeks, Sonny learned to read and write. He was some hedgehog!

But more important than anything else he did, Sonny ran the hedges. Every night, while everyone else slept, Sonny sprinted from one end to the other of the long hedge outside the burger joint. Sometimes he ran so fast that the world rushed by in a blur. He loved the feeling. Pure exhilaration - a feeling like a dream -- that he could fly up from the ground and do great things.

* * * * *

One day, his dream began to come true. After downing a particularly big, greasy late dinner, the coach of Hardly's track team stepped out the door of the burger joint and started walking toward his car. When he glanced toward the hedge, he could scarcely believe his eyes, and wondered if he hadn't consumed one Whopping Beef Glopper too many. A blue streak darted in and out of the long hedgerow, streaking from one end to another. The coach drew out his stopwatch and tried to clock the object. "Impossible," he muttered to himself. "He's too fast to clock." This creature was the fastest runner he had ever seen!

In no time at all Sonny was on the team, competing in local, then regional track tournaments. And as the summer days lengthened, so did the line of trophies Sonny brought back home to line the burrow. The whole town was proud of him. The coach began talking about Sonny as an Olympic hopeful. And then Nature, and his mother, called.

"Sonny, I know you want to be a great runner, and you will be some day! But first, you need to rest a bit. Don't you feel the chill in the air? It's nearly Fall. Soon it will be time to --"

"-- Hibernate, Mom? Gee whiz, I don't have time to hibernate! Can't I keep practicing all winter?" he pleaded.

But Mom was adamant. Concerned that practice all year 'round during his first year of life would permanently stunt Sonny's growth, she insisted. She prepared the burrow for the long winter, lining Sonny's chamber with soft, dry leaves and pine needles. The Coach and olympic stardom would have to wait until Spring.

* * * * *

All over town, the mercury shrank lower and lower, hunching down in a thick finger of silver. Farmers put up their corn and oats. Families canned summer produce. And the Hedgehog family withdrew from the light of day, safely ensconced in the burrow. Sonny read a comic book and listened to the rattle of brittle hedge branches whipped about by the wind. He felt fat and content from a meal of candied apples that the townspeople had generously invited him to take home from their Halloween party. He chuckled as he remembered carrying back an entire bushel on his back, neatly skewered on his quills.

Then suddenly, he had an idea.

"There's really no reason why I have to stay here sleeping all winter! I can just tunnel over a few feet and pop up on the far edge of the hedge. Mom'll never miss me!" he thought, pleased at this stroke of cleverness. And so he began to tunnel. He tunneled five, then ten minutes, all the while thinking of the great track contests he would win in the Spring. As he counted his victories, his digging became more and more enthusiastic.

And he grew more and more tired. "Just a short nap," he thought, "and then I'll tunnel upwards." So he curled up for a brief snooze.

One hour passed. Then one day. Succumbing to natural instinct, Sonnnny drifted deep into hibernation, beyond alpha, beyond beta, beyond even delta waves. He felt peaceful and secure. The quiet was wonderful. But like most peaceful times in the twenty-first century, it didn't last long.

* * * * *

"Whhhrrrrrrrrrr. Clunk. Clunk. Whhhrrrrrrrr. Zip! Whhhrrrrrrrrrr. The earth above him shook. The ground grew warm and then hot. Sonny awakened drenched in sweat and shaking. But not from fear. Everything around him was shaking. He looked up at the ceiling of his small cave and saw the earth churning. Zow! Time to clear outta here, he thought, digging furiously to escape whatever it was that was plunging toward him. Quick, quick, quick, he panted -- I must survive! And then he felt something -- a rusty pipe just large enough to squeeze through. He scrambled through the pipe, his toes clattering on the metal. After what seemed innumerable twists and turns, he saw the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. Relieved, he ran toward it and tumbled head over heels out of the pipe and into an immense room.

"Well, well, look who we have here! *Erinaceus europaeus*!"

A trim, kindly, mustachioed man bent over Sonny. Sonny had been called many things in his life, but never something so strange as this.

"All you alright?" the man asked. "Wait a minute -- silly of me -- let me aim the LinguaScrambler'Um at you and see what you've got to say!"

Sonny was too dazed to protest as the man wheeled over an odd looking contraption that was somehow shaped like all the letters in the alphabet mashed up together. He pointed it at Sonny.

"My name's not "Aceus -- it's Sonny! And what's happening out there underground!" Sonny heard himself squeak in an accusing tone of voice. He had never spoken human before.

"Oh that. So sorry it disturbed you! That's my Cogwinder Retractable Particulant Corer. I'm using it to dig for emeralds. Found six. Looking for the seventh. Then my work'll be done!" the man explained, smiling and speaking very quickly. He seemed to have alot on his mind and few words to waste. He had already returned to an enormous control panel at the far end of the room, where red and green lights danced and ribbons of paper spewed from a printer.

Sonny was too amazed to say anything more. It was obvious this man was some sort of genius, or totally wack-o, or perhaps both. Sonny trotted across the gleaming floor of the lab, marvelling at the dazzling array of contraptions lined up along the walls, atop counters, and piled high on shelves.

"What are you doing with all this stuff? Who are you?" Sonny demanded, stamping his foot with impatience. The magnificence of the lab had not put a damper on his boldness.

"Curiosity! How I love curiosity! You have the makings of a top notch scientist if only you can hold on to this admirable quality!" the man proclaimed, now giving over his full attention to Sonny. My name, see here --" he pointed to the tag on the lapel of his starchy white labcoat -- "is Dr. Ovi Kintobor. You can call me Dr. K. And my mission, my little friend, is to

save the planet from destruction. And for now, that is all you need to know. Unless, of course, you can help me find The Gray Emerald "

* * * * *

The Gray Emerald? Six other emeralds? Saving the planet? During the long months of winter, with a diligence that nearly matched the intensity of Kintobor's experiments, Sonny drew out some of the stories behind these seemingly disparate topics.

Kintobor, Sonny learned, was a brilliant nutro-biologist and former team leader of the government's controversial Nuvolution research. The goal of the research was to somehow reverse the effects of accumulated centuries of pollution and restore Earth to its natural, pristine state. The Nuvolution team of biologists, physicists, botanists, and astronomers worked assiduously toward this goal for fifteen years. Then, on the verge of a breakthrough concerning the structure and behavior of free radical subatomic particles, funding for the work was cut. With their project doomed to oblivion, the scientists scattered. Many team members took lucrative positions in private industry. Others went mad with frustration.

But Kintobor abhorred such resignation to one's fate. Instead of bailing out, he sabotaged the government's security system and moved the lab -- lock, stock, and barrel -- to a former radioactive dumping site in northern Nebraska, several miles away from Hardly. He figured he had selected the perfect site: what better place to test his solution than underneath the nation's most notorious, top-secret toxic wasteland.

* * * * *

All things natural, all creatures left untouched and uncontrolled by humans -- this summed up Kintobor's concept of the beautiful and the sublime. And as an extension of this passionate philosophy, besides working to save the planet, Kintobor had another goal: to rescue any poisoned or struggling animal he managed to find in the course of his excavations. Dozens of bunnies, squirrels, ducks, and even baby piglets were among the regular group of guests residing in lab. All were welcome to spend time gaining strength, resting, and eating Kintobor's excellent cooking. When fully recovered, they were encouraged to return to the wild. During this particularly severe winter, the animals were only too happy to remain in the lab until spring, a fact that was very good news for Sonny. Day after day he delighted in making friends and playing games with the other animals, and even teaching several to read and write. When Kintobor noticed Sonny's academic skills, a light flashed on above his head.

"Sonny," he said, "vacation's over! A mind is a terrible thing to waste. Henceforth and forthwith, I'm making you my assistant. That is, if you accept, of course," he added. Sonny was thrilled at the prospect. Because although Sonny had never known his father, Kintobor reminded him of the kind face in the photograph.

* * * * *

The days flew by, with Sonny by Dr. K.'s side almost constantly. Sonny learned computer science, from building small, portable computers to programming the mainframe. He learned about physics -- the old laws as well as the a few new theories set forth by Dr. K. His curiosity was

boundless, and led him into every part of Kintobor's lab as he documented the results of each experiment. As the lab was vast, Sonny soon took to running at top speeds to perform all his duties. How odd, he thought, to find himself gradually replacing dreams of Olympic glory with a dedication to science and helping the other animals.

Still, he knew he'd never be a nerd like Dr. K. So partly for relaxation, and partly for Dr. K's amusement, he logged in several hours a day on the supersonic treadmill that Kintobor had built for him. Slowly, Sonny built his speed to 200 , 400, then 761 m.p.h. -- the speed of sound. Then, impossibly, he crossed all known limits of acceleration and began running at the speed of light. Alarmed, Kintobor tried to slow the treadmill. Although he managed to gain control of the machine and bring his friend's velocity down slowly, a change had come over Sonny. Instead of his unexceptional, grayish-brown color, most of his body had turned cobalt blue, and his quills stood straight back in a stiff mohawk.

"My word!" exclaimed Kintobor, who struggled to comprehend what had just happened. "I think you've gone blue from the Advanced Non-Concussive Cobalt Effect!" he said, helping Sonny from the treadmill.

" 186 thousand miles per second! You're so fast, we should call you Sonic. SuperSonic, even. How do like that!" he cried, dancing around the lab like a demented pixie.

"Yeah, I like that!" answered Sonny. "From now on, my name is Sonic! Now watch how fast I can help you get your work done!"

* * * * *

Sonny *did* speed up the pace and success of Kintobor's experiments. But with all his mental and physical agility, he was unable to find The Gray Emerald, let alone understand why Kintobor was so frantic over it. What's the point to finding another emerald when we've already got six perfectly good ones, he wondered to himself. That very same day, he stumbled upon the answer. Running through a part of the lab that was still a bit unfamiliar, he tripped over a thick mass of wires. That's strange, he thought, Dr. K's always so tidy with his equipment. He followed the cords and cables to a small room he hadn't ever been in before. There, in the center of the room, stood a large machine comprised nearly totally of slender gold rings. The gold surfaces looked as though they had been crafted and polished with great care.

"Ah, I see you've found the Reverse Quantum BioFormulator. Excellent!" said Dr. K, who had hurried over to Sonic's side.

"Why didn't you tell me about this thing? And what do you use it for?" asked Sonic. He felt a bit hurt that Dr. K. had kept the machine a secret from him, and fairly bristled with impatience.

"Did you ever ask about it?" Dr. K. countered. "No! But now you are, so now you'll have your answer. But it's a long story, so let's have a bit of lunch," he suggested, pulling a few hardboiled eggs and muffins from a lunchbag he had stuffed in his pocket.

They pulled up chairs around the Reverse Quantum BioFormulator and began to eat. As usual, Sonic gulped down his meal in a flash. He was an old pro at fast food. Kintobor set a half-eaten egg on the counter near the machine and pulled a heavy iron key from his labcoat pocket. He walked over to a tall, lead-encased cabinet in the corner of the room, unlocked its door, and drew out a black velvet bag.

"These are the emeralds I told you about, Sonic," he said, carefully placing each on the black velvet."

They were truly incredible. Deep, brilliant colors with perfect, tiffany-cut shapes. Each must have weighed nearly a pound.

"They're perfect. Cut them myself," Kintobar boasted. "They contain a microlytic copy of all the inert energy of every gross and disgusting impulse or deed done by humans since the beginning of time," he continued.

Sonic gulped. "You mean they're evil?"

"Yes. Evil and highly unstable. Pure, chaotic energy," Kintobar sighed. "I transmorphed the chaos of the world into the emeralds, using the RQBF. Now the only thing remaining to do is to stabilize them with The Gray Emerald. Until we find The Gray Emerald, we're treading on very thin ice! If the emeralds are disturbed, in theory, they will double the amount of evil in the world. Stabilized, they will rid the world of evil and pollution. That done, I plan to launch them into space where they can harm no one," he said.

Sonic's eyes grew wide. So this is why Kintobar was always in a rush. He was holding the fate of the world in his hands, reflected in the sparkling surfaces of the six emeralds. Dr. K. noticed the expression on Sonic's face.

"Don't worry," he said. "There aren't many forces that will push these beauties over the edge. The only problem I know of, I guard against by keeping them in this lead cabinet. That problem is, of course --" he didn't have to finish his sentence.

"Radiation!" screamed Sonic, staring up at the computer screen on the wall.

* * * * *

The next few moments brought unspeakable panic and confusion. The monitor glowed red with a display of the impending wave of radiation that had somehow penetrated the Earth's surface and was heading straight for the lab. Kintobor scrambled to stuff the emeralds back in the bag. Sonic raced to the lead cabinet and flung open its doors but in doing so, jostled the RQBF. Kintobor lunged for the cabinet, lost his balance, and spilled the emeralds onto the floor. The RQBF turned on and cast a weird, sickly beam of light first on Dr. K., then on the emeralds, then on the half-eaten egg on the counter top. Sonic took shelter in the cabinet and reached for Kintobor's arm to drag him inside.

Then everything stopped.

There was no explosion, no shattered bits of glass or twisted metal. Just silence. Sonic awakened in the pitch black of the lead cabinet. Dr. Kintobor was not inside with him. Sonic struggled to open the door, and peeped out cautiously -- in perhaps the only cautious act of his life. There lay Kintobor, sprawled across the floor of the lab. But now he looked different. Hideous. Quite round, with no muscle tone. His labcoat now stretched tight across his enormous girth, his arms were spread wide, distended by the buckets of flesh encumbering his frame. But the most alarming transformation was not in his physical person, it was in a small, significant detail that Sonic had by now mostly taken for granted. The name on Kintobor's lapel pin was different. Sonic stared at it in shock.

"Dr. Ivo Robotnik" was his dear friend's new name.

Then Sonic understood everything.

* * * * *

Moments passed. It's difficult to say how long Sonic stood staring down at his friend. He realized he had to try to rescue his animal buddies and leave the lab -- in a hurry! If what he thought had happened had *really* happened, Kintobor had absorbed the evil of the Chaos Emeralds as well as the disgusting shape of the hardboiled egg. He would awaken as the vilest, most evil personality on the face of the Earth, set to strike out at anything in path.

Kintobor, or shall we say *Robotnik*, stirred.

"What are you gawking at, you ugly thing! Stand still so I can rip your quills out and turn you into an armadillo-bot!" Robotnik growled.

Sonic jumped back and rushed out of the room to the main lab. Scampering at the speed of light, he had just enough time to grab a PC and race toward his friends' quarters. But by remote control, Robotnik had already sealed the door to the animal habitat. Sonic bolted out the back door to the lab, then remembered the RQBF. He ran back to grab as many golden rings as he could. Then Sonic scampered away at the speed of light, Robotnik's curses echoing behind him.